

## **DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE WANAPUM DAM RECONFIGURATION AND REOPERATION PROJECT**

The Washington State Department of Ecology's Office of Columbia River, in cooperation with the Grant County Public Utility District (PUD), is beginning preparation of a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed reconfiguration and reoperation of Grant County PUD's Wanapum Dam. Environmental analyses conducted as part of the SEPA EIS process will be made available to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to facilitate preparation of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents needed to support the amendment process for the facility's existing FERC license. The Department of Ecology (Ecology) is requesting comments regarding the scope of the EIS.

**Description of Proposal:** Under Chapter 90.90 RCW, Ecology is directed to aggressively pursue development of new water supplies in the Columbia Basin for both instream and out-of-stream uses. Pursuant to that directive, Ecology has been in the process of implementing its Columbia River Basin Water Management Program (Management Program) since July 2006. A SEPA programmatic EIS for the Management Program that evaluated a variety of water supply development options was completed in February 2007. The programmatic EIS considered new surface storage facilities, modifications of existing surface storage facilities, aquifer storage and recovery, conservation, acquisitions and leases, as well as market reallocation mechanisms as available means for developing new water supplies.

The project level EIS that is currently being initiated will focus on a specific proposal for modification of an existing surface storage facility, the reconfiguration and reoperation of Wanapum Dam. Wanapum Dam is a hydroelectric dam that is operated as part of Grant County PUD's Priest Rapids Project. The purpose of the reconfiguration and reoperation proposal is to provide for storage of up to 70,000 acre-feet of water for both instream and out-of-stream uses on an annual basis. Ecology would likely allocate the stored water using a formula of two-thirds for out-of-stream uses and one-third for instream uses. The additional stored water would be made available by increasing the maximum operating elevation of Wanapum Dam by 3.5 feet (operating the pool at 575 feet above mean sea level (msl) instead of the current normal operating elevation of 571.5 feet above msl). The proposed maximum operating elevation of 575 feet is currently authorized under the existing FERC license and is known as the flood surcharge elevation. The proposal will require some structural modifications of Wanapum Dam.

Additional information on this project can also be found at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/crwmp.html>

**Proponent:** Washington State Department of Ecology

**Location of Proposal:** Wanapum Dam is located at river mile (RM) 415 on the Columbia River south of the Interstate-90 Bridge at Vantage, Washington. The reservoir behind Wanapum Dam, known as Wanapum Lake, lies within Kittitas and Chelan counties on the west and within Grant

and Douglas counties on the east. Wanapum Lake, with a surface area of approximately 14,680 acres, extends upstream 38 miles north from Wanapum Dam to Chelan County PUD's Rock Island Dam.

**SEPA Lead Agency:** Department of Ecology, Office of Columbia River

**EIS Required:** The lead agency has determined this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c) and will be prepared.

**The lead agency has identified the following areas for discussion in the EIS:** Erosion; air quality; climate; surface and ground water quality and quantity; fish, wildlife, and plants; energy and natural resources; scenic resources; land and shoreline use; cultural and historic resources; recreation; and public services and utilities.

**Scoping:** Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. Written comments will be accepted through **November 16, 2009**. Comments and requests to be added to the mailing list may be submitted to the SEPA contact person at the address below:

Tom Tebb, Central Regional Director  
Department of Ecology  
15 W. Yakima Avenue, Suite 200  
Yakima, WA 98902

Or emailed to: [gteb461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:gteb461@ecy.wa.gov)

Please use "Wanapum Dam EIS" in the subject line.

**Informational Open House:** An informational open house will be held on Thursday, October 22, 2009, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. to assist interested persons in obtaining additional information regarding the proposal. The location of the open house will be:

Moses Lake Event Center  
1475 Nelson Rd. NE Ste. C  
Moses Lake, WA 98837

The meeting facility is physically accessible to people with disabilities.

**SIGNATURE:**   
Derek I. Sandison, SEPA Responsible Official

**DATE:** October 13, 2009